

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent 6,903,728 (Baker) in view of U.S. patent application publication 2004/0203604 (Pugliese).

The applicants submit that neither Baker nor Pugliese, whether taken alone or in any proper combination, describes or would have suggested all features of claim 1.

Applicant's claim 1 describes a man-machine interface method that includes generating physical interactions with active zones belonging to an interface object, in which the active zones are associated with predetermined items of information. The active zones at which interactions occur are detected and associated with the predetermined item of information. The active zones are defined for a predetermined length of time and then deactivated at the end of the predetermined length of time. When interactions with the interface object are detected while the active zones are deactivated, the applicant's claim 1 requires that "said active zones are redefined automatically and successively as a function of the first successively-detected interactions."

Baker describes a state machine that is "generated such that each state ... specifies a set of labels for a corresponding set of soft-labeled keys associated with the wireless terminal" (abstract). The device of Baker "sends the SBID [system button identifier] associated with the currently-displayed label, and ... updates its own display based on the next set of labels contained in its state table" (col. 5, ln. 62-66). No part of Baker describes redefining the soft-labeled keys "automatically and successively as a function of the first successively-detected interactions," as required by claim 1.

The examiner attempts to find most of the features of claim 1 in Baker, but admits that Baker "fails to explicitly teach of said active zone redefinition as a function of the first successively-detected interactions" (March 4, 2009, office action, page 3). The examiner looks to Pugliese for these teachings.

Pugliese describes “an electronic device including a keyboard ... having a key lock function” (abstract). At least a portion of Pugliese’s keyboard “is unlocked by entering a sequence of intentional key entries” (abstract). On page 3 of the March 4, 2009, office action, the examiner characterizes Pugliese as follows:

In Pugliese the keys are defined as active or locked, and may be unlocked by a specific key sequence that the cpu recognizes as a system state change sufficient to redefine at least a portion of the keys. Pugliese provides a state change based on a known successively detected interaction, said key sequence, which provides a well known key lock function. Pugliese teaches of an obvious key sequence known in the art and available for use in the invention of Baker et al. as a method to change the state of the phone system, and accordingly redefine said active zones.

The examiner appears to equate Pugliese’s “locked keys” with the “deactivated active zones” of claim 1. And while Pugliese’s locked keys “may be unlocked by a specific key sequence,” the examiner is incorrect that “the cpu recognizes” the specific key sequence “as a system state change sufficient to redefine at least a portion of the keys.” Pugliese’s keys are either “locked” or “unlocked” but are not “redefined.” For example, as described in paragraph 29 of Pugliese, “numeral keys ‘9’ and ‘1’ of the plurality of keys 3 may be unlocked when pressed in a sequence ‘911.’” However, these numeral keys are not “redefined” after being unlocked.

No part of Pugliese describes or would have suggested redefining keys, much less redefining keys “automatically and successively as a function of the first successively-detected interactions,” as required by claim 1. Should the examiner uphold this objection, the applicant respectfully requests the examiner to point out specific passages of Pugliese that describe “a system state change sufficient to redefine at least a portion of the keys.”

As such, the applicants submit that neither Baker nor Pugliese, whether taken alone or in any proper combination, describes or would have suggested all features of claim 1.

Dependent claims 2-20 are patentable for at least similar reasons as the claims on which they depend are patentable.

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Conclusion

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

No fees are believed to be due. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 50-4189, referencing Attorney Docket No. 35202-002US1.

Respectfully submitted,

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